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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Zana Calls on PKK for Cease-Fire - Milliyet

PKK to Declare Third Cease-Fire - Aksam

Amb. Avivi: Israel Opposes a Kurdish State in Iraq -

Hurriyet

Israeli Troops Enter Settlers' Last Stronghold in Gaza -

Sabah

75 Percent of Settlers Evacuated from Gaza - Milliyet

Saudi al-Qaida Chief Killed in Medina - Sabah

First Russia-China Joint Military Exercise - Sabah

Cindy: Bush is a Terrorist - Aksam

Peace in Aceh - Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

Ankara Asks Brussels to Arrest PKK's Aydar - Yeni Safak

Iraqi Turkmen Demand Kirkuk-Based Federation - Cumhuriyet

Rice: Gaza Pullout a 'Dramatic Moment' - Yeni Safak

Israeli Police Drag Settlers from Synagogues - Cumhuriyet

Settlers Put Up Tough Fight Against Police in Synagogues -

Radikal

Rice Urges Israel to Take Forward Steps in West Bank - Zaman

Gaza Pullout May Bring Lasting Stay in West Bank - Yeni

Safak

Attack Against US Convoy Kills 4 Troops in Iraq - Yeni Safak

US Watches Russia-China Joint Exercises - Cumhuriyet

China-Russia Show of Force in Pacific - Zaman

Cindy a Nightmare for Bush - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

PKK May Announce Cease-Fire Friday: Dailies expect Kongra-Gel leader Zubeyir Aydar to announce a PKK cease-fire from September 1 - October 3, the date Turkey is scheduled to begin EU accession talks. Aydar is expected to hold a press conference in Brussels on Friday, where he will call on Turkey to accept imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as an interlocutor in efforts to resolve the Kurdish issue. Aydar will also ask for a general amnesty and an end to Ocalan's isolation. "Cumhuriyet" finds it unlikely that the PKK will lay down its arms or pull its fighters out of Turkey. "Aksam" believes the PKK decision on a cease-fire has been dictated by growing uneasiness among Turkey's Kurds over bloody attacks and the alleged killings of PKK dissidents. The paper also notes the toughening position of the EU against terrorism. "Vatan" claims that it was Ocalan who ordered DEHAP to disband in order to join the 'Democratic Society Movement (DTH) led by Leyla Zana and other former Kurdish parliamentarians. Meanwhile, Ankara reportedly asked Belgian authorities to prevent Zubeyir Aydar, who is also a former DEP lawmaker, from holding a press conference in Brussels, and to arrest the Kongra-Gel leader if he shows up there. Unidentified sources told "Hurriyet" that Aydar had been granted political asylum in Switzerland in 1994, and that he did not need a visa to go to Belgium. The sources add that Aydar may already be in Belgium.

On Friday, the Belgian Interior Ministry forced the cancellation of the Kongra-Gel press conference in Brussels, and warned that Aydar would be arrested and extradited to Switzerland if he were to be found, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency reported. Aydar told the pro-PKK, Copenhagen-based "Roj TV" on Friday that the 'People's Defense Forces' (HPG) will halt operations beyond self-defense for one month to 'test' the Turkish government. Aydar welcomed Erdogan's statement that the 'Kurdish problem' will be solved through democracy. 'He is welcome to try to solve it. We are giving him an opportunity to do so. But thus far they have not done anything on this issue. All we see are statements,' Aydar emphasized.

Zana and Colleagues Urge PKK to Call Cease-Fire: The Democratic Society Movement (DTH) founded by former DEP lawmakers including Leyla Zana called on the PKK to lay down its arms indefinitely and unconditionally. 'We regard the Prime Minister's statements as political overtures that are courageous, determined and consistent, and ones that can be translated into action,' the DTH said in a statement on Thursday. The statement urged the PKK to decide on a 'suspension of operations' as soon as possible. Meanwhile Sirri Sakik, a former colleague of Zana, claimed that the DTH is no different from Kurdish parties established in the past. 'Turkey needs a strong left-wing social democratic party, but the DTH has failed to meet this need. It has limited itself to ethnic issues,' Sakik stressed.

Prosecutor Launches Legal Action Against DEHAP: An Ankara prosecutor has initiated a legal investigation against the pro-Kurdish party DEHAP for a statement in which the party said that it had exerted efforts to make the Turkish state accept imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as an interlocutor. The prosecutor is considering whether the release of the statement constituted a violation of the ban on terrorist propaganda. Meanwhile, a case that could lead to the closure of DEHAP on charges of separatist activities is pending at the Constitutional Court.

Iraqi Turkmen Demand Autonomy: Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) Turkey representative Ahmed Muratli told the private all-news channel NTV that if the Kurds and Shiites are given federal rights and regions in Iraq, the Iraqi Turkmen will demand the same. 'We want the region that extends from Tal Afar to Mandali, including Kirkuk as the capital, to be given to us as the 'Turkmeneli' (Turkoman country) federation,' Muradli said. He also asked that the administration of Kirkuk be given to the Turkmen. Meanwhile, in a meeting with Turkmen leaders from Tal Afar yesterday in Ankara, Turkish officials pledged to build a hospital, new motorways, and a satellite television channel in the Turkmen populated northern Iraqi city.

Ambassador Avivi on Kurds/Iraq, Turkey/EU: The Israeli Ambassador in Ankara, Pinhas Avivi, told "Hurriyet" that the establishment of a Kurdish state in Iraq would bring about a Shiite state as well. 'This is against Israeli interests,' Avivi said, stressing that Israel will cooperate with Turkey in northern Iraq. Avivi called on Turkey to join international efforts to provide economic support for Gaza, which, the Israeli Ambassador believes, will help to end terror activities. Avivi also said that Israel supports Turkey's EU membership drive. 'I tell the Europeans who wonder what will become of Europe after the membership of 70 million Turks that that they should instead think about what will become of the world if Turkey is left out of the EU,' Avivi emphasized.

Dogus-GE Consumer Finance Partnership Likely: Turkish business conglomerate Dogus Holding has agreed to enter into exclusive negotiations with General Electric Consumer Finance concerning the sale of 50 percent of the group's shares in Garanti Bank, papers report. Dogus wants to sell half of its 55.1 stake in Garanti Bank to GE Consumer Finance for an estimated 1.4 billion USD. Garanti's partnership talks with Italy's Banca Intesa over Garanti Bank have fallen apart twice since 2001.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq; Israel/Gaza Pullout

"While the Middle East is Being Reshaped" Haluk Ulman observed in the economic-political "Dunya" (8/19): "The political, economic, and ideological battles that are taking place during the Iraqi constitutional process will not be settled easily during the next week. It is also likely that under pressure from the Bush administration, the sides in Iraq will have to claim that they have reached an agreement. Because of the remaining differences, the agreement is destined to remain on paper. Huge problems are likely to reemerge when the time comes to implement the constitution. This will begin the process of Iraq's disintegration. As the result of this process, a Kurdish state will be established in Iraq's north and an Islamic republic in the south. These two new states will share the oil revenues of Iraq. The Sunnis do not support the country's disintegration, but are powerless to oppose it. The Sunnis will most likely end up in the Iraqi desert, where they will continue their terrorist activities. The goal for an independent state among Kurds and the desire to establish a religious state among the Shiites will start a new process of reconstruction in the Middle East. These two new states will change the balances of power in the region. Let's hope that these developments will remain only in our imagination as a kind of nightmare. We owe this nightmare to Bush and his team, as a result of their initiatives in the name of peace and democracy in the Middle East."

"Why Do We Oppose an Independent Kurdish State?"
Cengiz Candar commented in the conservative-sensational "Dunden Bugune Tercuman" (8/19): "If there were not a single Kurd living in Turkey, would there still be such a reaction against the establishment of a Kurdish state in Iraq? We certainly did not object to the establishment of two Arab States -- Syria and Iraq -- in the territory which was ours for 400 years leading up to World War I. If there had been millions of Arabs (instead of Kurds) living within our borders at the founding of the Turkish Republic, would we have opposed the establishment of Iraq and Syria as independent Arab states? Certainly we would have. Therefore, we must recognize that the problem is really about Turkey's Kurdish issue, not about a possible independent Kurdish state. There is no need for further speculation -- Turkey does have a Kurdish problem. For the sake of Turkey's territorial and national integrity, we have to solve that problem."

Who Will Clear the Debris?

Ferai Tinc wrote in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (8/19): "Until now, the Israeli government had never withdrawn from land it occupied during the 1967 war without first signing a peace agreement. The current withdrawal does not include such an agreement. Negotiations on security issues between the Israelis and Palestinians have been continuing for some time. Israel wants the Palestinian administration to become stronger against violent Palestinian elements. By encouraging the Palestinians to strengthen their security institutions, Israel is preparing the ground for a Palestine state. Sharon is not betraying Israel through his Gaza withdrawal plan. On the contrary, he is paving the way for a new peace process. He has also ensured the support of the Israeli people for this plan. Outside of the occupied Gaza Strip, sixty percent of the Israeli people support Sharon's decision. As part of the Israeli pullout, the infrastructure will be left untouched, but Israeli homes, schools, and other buildings will be demolished. The reason is to prevent Hamas or the Islamic Jihad terror organizations from claiming territory and victory. Every detail has been discussed and agreed prior to the withdrawal, except for one issue. Who is going to clear up the debris? In fact, this is a very important question. Clearing the debris has always been an important element in the peace process. Of course, the most important thing of all is to clear the debris which remains in people's souls."

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